

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
4th CDBG CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

February 28, 2020, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Third Floor Conference Room, Lewiston City Building

FINAL MINUTES

Roll Call: The meeting was started at 9:06 a.m.

Members Present: Pauline Gudas, David Nielsen, Jr., Scott McClelland, Ashley Medina, Safiya Khalid and Abdikadir Negeye

Members Absent: Sue Charron

Staff Present: Lincoln Jeffers, Jayne Jochem, Melissa Lavallee, Heidi McCarthy and Cathy Lekberg

1) Introductions

2) Agency Interviews

Central Maine Community Health Corp. – Healthy Androscoggin – Katie Boss, Health Promotion Manager presenting

Katie said their agency provides many public health services and their experience and recent work on healthy housing gives the needed perspective to tackle the gaps in services in downtown Lewiston which include childhood lead poisoning, deteriorating housing stock, educational offerings for renters, homeowners and potential homebuyers and more. They also have a Neighbor 2 Neighbor program which works with trained ambassadors who educate their friends and neighbors about public health issues through a unique collaboration with the new mainer community leaders trained to deliver various public health information to their community. They recruit 16 ambassadors who attend two hour training about lead, mold, radon, smoke/tobacco, pests and asthma triggers. They do an initial visit to homes and a second visit one month later to the same homes and then a third visit eight months after initial visit. They also do tracking and evaluations. The proposed services will be for community members of all ages, race/ethnicities that reside in the downtown. They are also finding other ways to share information like short videos for education property owners to make them successful and to meet fair housing goals. Scott asked if this is geared toward adults and Katie said yes but they have other programs for children. Abdi asked if there were other tools besides education and Katie said they offer cleaning kits that include buckets, mops, trash bags and wipes and they also provide a picture flip chart for people to use.

Veteran's, Inc. – Increasing Support Services for ME Veterans – Ray Michaud, Site Coordinator

Ray gave a general overview of the agency. He said they renovated the St. Joseph's Catholic School on Main Street in Lewiston and the residence opened in 2014. This building was renovated to function as both transitional and permanent housing for 20

male veterans with efficiency apartments. The veterans average stay would be from 6 to 12 months but would be able to stay up to 2 years if needed. They have on-site a Housing Counselor and a Case Manager, and the CDBG funds would help them employ a part-time residential advisor at the residence. The Residential Advisor would provide additional case management services as well as assist in completing various facility operations during the latter part of the day when the Site Coordinator is not on-site. Scott asked how veterans know about the facility. Ray said they can just come in and fill out an application and they also get referrals from Preble Street and the VA. Ashley asked if there were any other qualifications other than being a veteran and Ray said they cannot have committed a serious crime or sex offense. Pauline asked how many veterans they have right now and Ray said they have 18. He said there are some on a waiting list. Scott asked why sex offenders are not allowed and Ray said he was not sure of the specifics but is one of the policies.

YWCA Central Maine – School-Aged Children Program – Melanie Gagnon, Executive Director and Amanda Hatch, Director of Programs & Mission Impact presenting

Melanie said this program provides out of school services for local kids and they are eligible to participate up to 12 years of age. They also offer a hearty snack when they are there. The CDBG funding would be used for staff salaries to allow them to keep kids safe at the facility and offer STEM and other programs. They also offer open gym and open swim at the facility for kids up to age 17. Safiya asked what if a kid cannot swim and Amanda said they provide swim tests to see their ability and they offer life jackets and noodles for them to float. Safiya asked about transportation and Melanie said they do not have their own but rely on other transportation and many can walk to the facility. Scott asked what STEM was and Melanie said Science, Technology, Engineering and Math which are computer-based programs. Abdi asked about staff qualifications and Amanda said staff are licensed and complete 30 hours of training, they require background checks. Staff is also trained for special needs education they have multi-skilled staff that speak different languages. Ashley asked if her 13 year old daughter could be a volunteer and Melanie said yes, during the summer months. Pauline thought that all kids should know how to swim and Melanie said they could possibly fund a lifeguard that could teach swimming.

Promise Early Education Center – Childcare Program – Sharon Philbrook Bergeron, Financial Director and Monica Redlerslee presenting

Monica said the Head Start program serves children up to five years of age. Their mission is to take care of at-risk and low-income families that either are working or in school. Promise provides comprehensive services in a safe environment 11 hours a day, five days a week. Besides providing a variety of learning experiences, Promise provides health services such as immunizations, dental, medical, mental health, nutritional services and vision and hearing screenings. They also provide formula and diapers to parents in need. When a child enters the program, they are never asked to leave even if there are behavioral problems. She said there are 60 families on the waiting list. Sharon said they get 70% of State funding and because most parents are working, they pay a fee

according to their income to match this funding. The CDBG funds are used for personnel. Abdi asked about languages and Melanie said they have staff that speak different languages. Pauline asked if the CDBG funds were being used for Lewiston families and Sharon said yes, the funds are used to pay teachers in Lewiston.

3) City Programs – Heidi McCarthy and Misty Parker presenting

Micro Enterprise Program

Heidi said the Micro Enterprise program gives low interest loans to provide a variety of assistance to entrepreneurs trying to grow an existing business or start a new business with 1–5 employees in the downtown. This is a \$45,000 placeholder in the budget.

Choice Action Activity Leverage

Misty said they received a Choice Neighborhood Grant in the amount of \$1.3 million. \$350,000 was used to develop a transformation plan for the downtown. They have just over \$1 million to do improvements. Improvements recommended were as follows:

Kennedy Park beautification improvements i.e. seating in group settings, additional artwork, fountain added to center of park.

Paradis Park improvements – This is a heavily used park and needs to be opened up and additional enhancements added for kids of all ages.

Add public art to neighborhoods and vacant lots done in collaboration with Public Works so it can be maintained.

Streetscape improvements i.e. bike racks and outdoor seating, etc.

The Committee asked what the budget would be and Misty said \$237,500 plus an additional \$25,000 to add drinking water fountains.

Pauline brought up the fact that Paradis Park improvements got destroyed and the Kennedy Park gazebo railings and the signs were damaged. She thought security was very important to protect new improvements. The Committee discussed Potvin Park and how the neighborhood took responsibility to keep the park safe and undamaged. It was mentioned that Paradis Park should be made more visible and engage youth in the neighborhood to help out so they can build ownership.

Choice Housing Gap Funding Program

Misty said that this pilot program is to fund a variety of substantial rehabs of older buildings that are distressed in the Choice Neighborhood. Instead of making buildings lead safe, they would be lead free. This money could fill in the gaps in achieving this. At this time, the budget has not been decided on this program.

4) Review and approval of February 21, 2020 CDBG CAC meeting minutes.

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Ashley Medina** to accept the February 21, 2020 CAC CDBG meeting minutes as presented. Second by **Safiya Khalid**.

VOTED: 6-0 (Passed)

5) Any other business members may have relating to the duties of the CDBG Committee. None

6) Adjournment

The following motion was made:

MOTION: by **Safiya Khalid** to adjourn meeting at 11:05 p.m. Second by **Ashley Medina**

VOTED: 7-0 (Passed)